

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05 PC-01 /074 W
-----301544Z 075859 /53

R 291430Z APR 77
FM AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7855
INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
AMEMBASSY VICTORIA
AMEMBASSY LONDON

C O N F I D E N T I A L NAIROBI 5389

E. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, ETRD, ELTN, KE
SUBJ: POLITICAL FOCUS SHIFTS AWAY FROM KANU ELECTIONS

1. SUMMARY: LESS THAN A MONTH AFTER THEY WERE ABRUPTLY POSTPONED, THE KANU NATIONAL ELECTIONS HAVE VIRTUALLY CEASED TO BE A TOPIC OF CONVERSATION IN KENAY. YET POLITICAL MANEUVERING CONTINUES UNABATED. THE FOCUS IS NOW ON PARLIAMENT AND ON NYANZA PROVINCE (LUO TRIBAL AREA). IN BOTH PLACES THE INITIATIVE HAS BEEN SEIZED BY THE ANTI-VICE PRESIDENT MOI GROUP, WHO HAVE BECOME MORE RATHER THAN LESS AGGRESSIVE. END SUMMARY.

2. KANU ELECTION: NO ONE, OTHER THAN PERHAPS PRESIDENT KENYATTA, KNOWS FOR SURE WHEN THE ELECTIONS WILL TAKE PLACE. OPINIONS AS TO WHAT THE PRESIDENT'S INTENTIONS NOW ARE VARY CONSIDERABLY, BUT EVERYONE AGREES THAT IT IS KENYATTA HIMSELF WHO WILL DETERMINE THE TIMING. THE PUBLIC POSTURE ADOPTED BY ANTI-MOI GROUP IS THAT ELECTIONS ARE OFF FOR FORESEEABLE FUTURE. A LEADING MEMBER OF THIS GROUP,
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MINISTER OF COOPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT PAUL NGEI (KAMBA), TOLD EMBOFF APRIL 29 THAT HE WISHED TO PLAN HIS (LEADER) GRANT TO VISIT U.S. TO BEGIN AT END OF MAY, 1977 BECAUSE HE WAS CERTAIN ELECTIONS WOULD NOT BE RESCHEDULED FOR ANY TIME SOON. MP GEORGE ANYONA (KISII), ALSO A LEADING FIGURE IN ANTI-MOI GROUP, HAS TOLD EMBOFF ON MORE THAN ONE OCCASION THAT HE BELIEVES PRESIDENT HAS NO INTENTION OF RESCHEDULING ELECTIONS

WITHIN NEXT FEW MONTHS. THESE COMMENTS SQUARE WITH WHAT EX FONMIN NJORGE MUNGAI, WHO WAS LEADER AND REMAINS AN IMPORTANT FIGURE IN ANTI-MOI GROUP, PREVIOUSLY HAS STATED.

3. ON OTHER HAND, FINANCE MINISTER KIBAKI TOLD DCM THAT MOVE WAS AFOOT TO RECOMMEND RESCHEDULING OF KANU ELCTIONS DURING TEMPORARY RECESS IN THIS SESSION OF PARLIAMENT (NAIROBI 4719), AND OTHER SOURCES REPORT THAT MOI HIMSELF WENT TO MOMBASA WEEKEND OF APRIL 23-24 TO DISCUSS RE-SCHEDULING OF ELECTIONS DIRECTLY WITH PRESIDENT. AS USUAL, KENYATTA IS PLAYING CARDS VERY CLOSE TO HIS CHEST AND MAY AS IN THE PAST BE TRANSMITTING CONFLICTING SIGNALS TO OPPOSING FACTIONS.

4. PARLIAMENT: LED BY PARLIAMENT'S MOST VOCAL MEMBER, GEORGE ANYONA, ANTI-MOI GROUP IS MAKING EFFORT TO EXPOSE CORRUPTION THEY BELIEVE TO INVOLVE LEADING MEMBERS OF THE MOI CAMP. IMMEDIATE TARGET IS HANDLING OF MULTIMILLION DOLLAR TENDERS TO SUPPLY KENYA RAILWAYS WITH VARIETY OF EQUIPMENT. LETTERS OF INTENT TO SEVERAL COMPANIES, WHICH WERE ORIGINALLY EXTENDED JUNE 9, 1976, WERE WITHDRAWN BY MINISTRY OF POWER AND COMMUNICATIONS WITHOUT EXPLANATION ON SEPTEMBER 8, 1976. CERTAIN FIRMS DID MUCH BETTER SECOND TIME AROUND. ANYONA HAS SUGGESTED THAT ATTORNEY GENERAL NJONJO, MINISTER OF POWER AND COMMUNICATIONS OMOLO OKERO (LUO) AND EX-AGRICULTURE MINISTER BRUCE MCKENZIE, A POWERFUL BEHIND THE SCENES OPERATOR HERE, WERE ENGAGED IN SECRETIVE (READ ILLICIT) DEALINGS WITH RESPECT TO HANDLING OF THESE TENDERS. NJONJO, OKERO AND MCKENZIE ARE CLOSE MOI ALLIES AND ASSOCIATES. CONFIDENTIAL

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NAIROBI STANDARD, WHICH SERVES AS POLITICAL MOUTHPIECE FOR GROUP ASSOCIATED WITH MUNGAI, HAS DEVOTED HEADLINES FOR TWO DAYS TO THIS AFFAIR IN EVIDENT EFFORT TO GET AT MOI BY DISCREDITING HIS ASSOCIATES.

5. TO DATE, NEITHER ANYONA NOR OTHER MP'S WHO HAVE SPOKEN ON THIS ISSUE IN PARLIAMENT HAVE MADE SPECIFIC ALLEGATIONS. ANYONA TOLD EMBOFF THAT STRATEGY IS FOR HIM TO TABLE MOTION MAY 6 CALLING FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF PARLIAMENTARY COMMISSION TO INVESTIGATE POSSIBILITY OF MALFEASANCE BY COMPANIES AND OFFICIALS INVOLVED. ANYONA SAYS PRIVATELY THAT HE POSSESSES DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE OF CORRUPTION WHICH HE WILL INTRODUCE AT RIGHT MOMENT.

6. BATTLE FOR LOU SUPPORT: KIAMBU KIKUYU-LED GROUP HAVE REGARDED KIKUYU-LUO ALLIANCE AS INTEGRAL PART OF THEIR POLITICAL STRATEGY, BUT HAVE BEEN FRUSTRATED IN IMPLEMENTING IT. CURRENT LUO CABINET MEMBERS OMOLO OKERO AND MINISTER OF TOURISM AND WILDLIFE GGUTU, ARE MOI BACKERS. KIAMBU

KIKUYU'S HAVE, THEREFORE, ENCOURAGED THE POLITICAL RESURRECTION OF EX-KENYA VP JARAMOGI OGINGA ODINGA, WHO SHARES DIS-
TASTE FOR MOI, AND WHO IS STILL GENERALLY CONCEDED TO BE THE
SINGLE MOST POPULAR AND INFLUENTIAL LUO. ALL EFFORTS, HOWEVER,
TO REFLOAT ODINGA IN KANU ELECTION CONTEXT WERE NEUTRALIZED
BY PARTY APPARATUS CONTROLLED BY MOI SIDE (MATANO, MUNOKO
ETC.).

7. NOW, IN NEW GAMBIT, GROUP OF FOUR LUO MPS AND OTHER
TRIBAL LEADERS WHO OPPOSE MOI (SUCH AS ACHIENG ONEKO), HELD
PUBLIC MEETING IN SOUTH NYANZA AND CALLED PUBLICLY FOR
ODINGA TO REASSUME LEADERSHIP OF LUO COMMUNITY. FOUR PART
RESOLUTION RELEASED BY GROUP CALLED SPECIFICALLY FOR LUO
UNION, THE LUO TRIBAL WELFARE ASSOCIATION, TO BRING ABOUT
CLOSER COOPERATION WITH KIKUYU COUNTERPART, GEMA. MEETING
WAS GIVEN PROMINENT FRONT PAGE TREATMENT BY STANDARD, AND
VIRTUALLY IGNORED BY DAILY NATION. OTHER LUO MPS SUBSE-
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QUENTLY ISSUED STATEMENTS OPPOSING ANY RESUMPTION OF LEADER-
SHIP ROLE BY ODINGA. SIGNIFICANT ELEMENTS ARE 1) THAT
INFLUENCE OF KIAMBU KIKUYU GROUP, AND THEIR CONTROL OF THE
STANDARD, HAS RENDERED IT ACCEPTABLE AND POSSIBLE TO MAKE
EFFECTIVE PUBLIC CALL FOR ODINGA'S RETURN TO LUO LEADERSHIP;
AND THAT, 2) PRO-ODINGA GROUP HAS THROWN IN PUBLICLY WITH
KIKUYUS.

8. COMMENT: AS PREDICATED, POLITICAL INITIATIVE HAS PASSED
TO ANTI-MOI GROUP. THIS GROUP IS VIGOROUSLY ATTEMPTING TO
EXPLOIT EXTRA TIME GRANTED BY ELECTION POSTPONEMENT TO CHANGE
THE POLITICAL BALANCE. THIS IS NOT TO SUGGEST THEY WILL BE
SUCCESSFUL, BUT THEIR POLITICAL MANEUVERING IN PAST FEW WEEKS
SEEMS FAR BETTER PLANNED AND ORCHESTRATED THAN THAT PRIOR TO
ORIGINAL ELECTION DATE.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: CORRUPTION, ELECTIONS, POLITICAL SITUATION, ALLEGATIONS, RAILROADS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 29-Apr-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977NAIROB05389
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770152-0427
Format: TEL
From: NAIROBI
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t1977044/aaaaadiw.tel
Line Count: 155
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: c6a22aa2-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 04-Feb-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2755989
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: POLITICAL FOCUS SHIFTS AWAY FROM KANU ELECTIONS
TAGS: PINT, ETRD, ELTN, KE, KANU, (MOI, DANIEL T ARAP)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/c6a22aa2-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009